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## Airman provides life support while deployed in Vietnam

by Katherine Gleason, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio

— When Tech Sgt. Timothy Robinson returned on November 10<sup>th</sup> from his assignment in Vietnam, he was not just happy to be back in the United States, he was also honored to have had the opportunity to help those who had served this country before him.

On most days, Robinson works as the NCOIC of the Acceleration Branch, for Air Force Research Laboratory's Human Effectiveness Directorate. However, Robinson switched gears and spent a month in Vietnam working as a life support analyst to recover and identify the remains of missing American soldiers.

Robinson's work was conducted as part of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) program. The mission of JTF-FA is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of any Americans who are still considered missing or unaccounted for while serving in because of the war in Southeast Asia.

"This was a wonderful experience for me," said Robinson. "I'd been trying to go on this assignment for about two years, and I was finally chosen."

While working as a life support analyst, Robinson had three major responsibilities. The first was to help narrow the scope of the search.

"I worked to identify any life support gear found in a particular location," explained Robinson. "Then, I assisted in directing the team anthropologist on the best places to search."

The second responsibility of the team was to examine wreckage sites to determine if anyone was inside the aircraft at the time of impact. Third, was to identify the type, model and tail number of the aircraft.

Searches conducted by the team were structured like archaeological digs. A grid was laid out around the potential recovery location, and team members and locals carefully sifted through the dirt.

Because of the remote nature of the searches, the team slept in



*Tech Sgt. Timothy Robinson takes a break during a recovery operation in Vietnam. This dig is one of many conducted by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting program to identify missing and unaccounted for Americans in Southeast Asia. (Photo courtesy of Robinson)*

tents in the field, and was responsible for providing most of their own necessities.

"We worked seven days a week," said Robinson. "Before we left for Vietnam, we had to purchase enough food to last for the full 30 days. We were also provided with a list of clothing, personal, and quality of life items that we would need during the stay."

While the living conditions were challenging, Robinson never forgot why he was in this distant land.

"I felt a sense of honor and pride while I was there trying to bring back our fellow service members that gave all to their country," he said.

Since 1973, the remains of more than 700 American service members have been identified in Southeast Asia. Nearly 2,000 are still listed as missing or unaccounted for. Visit [www.pacom.mil/jtffa.htm](http://www.pacom.mil/jtffa.htm) for more information. @